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PIONEER WOMEN OF WASHTENAW COUNTY
By Florence Woolsey Hazzard

Much has been written of the men who settled Michigan and other territories west of the Atlantic coastal states. Young men they were, for the most part, who, weary of parental authority and the poor living to be made on wornout land, left home at the age of 21 or thereabouts to seek new opportunity. From Vermont and the other New England states they poured into New York State after the Revolution. From New York they or their sons went on to the Northwest Territory in the early nineteenth century.

In 1816 government surveyors reported falsely that land in the interior of Michigan was not fit to be lived on, and in consequence white men left the territory west of Detroit to the Indians. By 1820, even a trading post on the west bank of the Huron River, a mile east of what is now Ypsilanti, had been abandoned because its clients, Indians, had moved west. The empty building of this post, called Godfrey's, was to serve as a shelter for the few homeseekers who braved the unknown in 1822 and 1823.

Early in 1823 a party of men drove a large stock of cattle from Sandusky. At Monroe they sold all the cattle but those needed on their prospective farms, and pushed through the wilds on foot to the shelter at Godfrey's. Then, leaving some to build a log house, the rest returned for oxen and provisions. One of them, Benjamin Woodruff, returned to Washtenaw County on July 6, bringing Mrs. Woodruff, six children, and a hired woman, apparently by boat. This family settled in the completed cabin near the old trading post, and named their center of civilization-to-be Woodruff's Grove. Thus entered two white women into the county.

Comparatively little has been written about the contribution of pioneer women to our county. It has been the objective of the writer of this paper to look into this neglected record and place

women beside men in local history. The study of Washtenaw County women is a small part of research on American women, carried on over a period of ten years.

In the fall of 1823, John and Sarah Bryan, "York Staters," came to the settlement of Woodruff's Grove with their five children. The lake trip to Detroit took some ten days. After three days in Detroit, while Mr. Bryan looked for suitable land, the dauntless family rode in an ox cart for four days through thick woods, the father cutting the road in front of the oxen. . . . . .

Ed. note: From this point, Mrs. Hazzard carried the story forward by reading about sixteen pages from a 21-page article of the same title, written by her and published in Michigan History Magazine in June, 1948 (v. 32, no. 2, pp. 181-201). Much as we should like to insure that readers of the Impressions have these stories by Mrs. Hazzard, it seems unnecessary to reprint them when Michigan History Magazine is so accessible. If the opening narrative above was broken off at a tantalizing point,- that is just what is desired. Let your aroused curiosity anent the Bryans' adventures last long enough to impel you to ask for Michigan History Magazine at your library, or borrow it from a friend who subscribes. There are several files of the Magazine at the University: in the General Library, Michigan Historical Collections, and Museums Building; also at the Ann Arbor Public Library, and perhaps in other towns of the County. The article is interesting reading for anyone, and deeply personal for all women members of our Society.

Mrs. Hazzard added to the article referred to above her own translation of some comments on our county printed in the German Amerikanisches Magazin in 1835. The author was Herr Karl Neidhard, who gained his first-hand knowledge of Washtenaw County when a guest of Henry and Louisa Mann in Ann Arbor, in 1834.

> With my own eyes I made sure that everything which can be cooked, roasted and baked with wheat, corn and potatoes, with pork and poultry, with eggs and butter, milk and honey, they /the German settlers/ have daily in abundance, the poorest as well as the richest. Nowhere did I see any but snow-white bread; rye is not even cultivated. Whoever wants to spend his time fishing and hunting can easily get a good mess of fish or game. The German settlers find it to their advantage to spend time in farming. Work...is much sought after and they pay a farmhand ten to twelve dollars a month, a maid-servant a dollar a week, a day laborer three fourths dollar a day. In Detroit and along the Lake Erie shore and the Detroit River products scarcely bring as good prices as in the Atlantic sections; here they are at least twenty percent cheaper. . .

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> If one observes these women as they manage these log houses, like the most elegant European ladies as to refinement and courtesy, as well as figure and clothing, occupied only in keeping chamber and kitchen clean, and in adorning themselves and their dwelling, one has to call the masters of these homes lucky. . .

Mrs. Hazzard also made reference to seven original Allen letters owned by the University, in the Michigan Historical Collections, the William L. Clements Library, and the Rare Book Room of the General Library. There are five manuscript originals from Ann Allen to her son, Thomas M. McCue, and one to her daughter, Sarah Ann Allen. The seventh letter was written by Sarah Ann Allen as a child, to her half-brother, Thomas M. McCue. The letters trace the doings of John and Ann Allen in early Ann Arbor and New York. The picture of prosperity among the Germans was by no means duplicated in the Allen family, where the effects of economic difficulties were felt.

It is expected that further data on women of early Washtenaw County will be published in Michigan History Magazine for September, 1950. Mrs. Hazzard is interested in pictures, anecdotes, old letters and authentic data on pioneer women. If you have any contributions, please write down the information and send it to Mrs. A. S. Hazzard, 1015 Packard St., Ann Arbor. She promises to file copies with the Washtenaw Historical Society.

Ann Arbor, Michigan
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THE ORIGINAL SURVEY OF WASHTENAW COUNTY
By William J. Armstrong

In order to discuss intelligently the surveys of public lands in this county, it seems to your speaker that the first thing to do is to take you back to the day when it was first decided to survey and describe the public domain. For this purpose I have used much information taken from University records and the various manuals issued for the guidance of the deputy surveyors during the progress of the work. Some excellent material from Mentor L. Williams' fine editorial in the Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review for Winter of 1947 entitled "Compass and Chain," and many hours spent reading records in the Register of Deeds office of Washtenaw County.

At the close of the Revolutionary War the title of all the land in the newly formed United States was vested in the various states. Gradually definite boundaries were fixed upon for each state and all the land outside of these boundaries was ceded by the states to the Federal Government. Other territory was acquired from the Indians and all their claims were adjusted. Still other areas were acquired by purchase until the government found itself with an immense public domain and a considerable deficit in the treasury.

As settlers were constantly seeking new fields and wishing to acquire title to the land they tilled, it was decided to offer the public lands for sale to provide funds for retiring the public debt. In order that the descriptions of lands so sold should not conflict, nor the boundaries overlap, it became necessary to devise some accurate scheme of survey.

Early in 1781, Pelatiah Webster had proposed a scheme which was highly suggestive. He said that the ceded territory should be surveyed into townships of six, eight, or ten miles square and sold at auction. His idea was that the townships should be laid out in tiers and sold a tier at a time. In this way the frontier would be more closely settled and in less danger from attack by Indians.

On the 7th of May, 1784, a committee, of which Thomas Jefferson was chairman, reported, recommending the distinctly New England system of surveys. The territory was to be divided into "hundreds," of ten geographical miles square, each mile containing one geographical mile of 6086.4 feet, and the hundreds divided into lots one geographical mile square, each containing 850.4 acres. The lines were to run due north and south, by the true meridian, and east and west. In March of the next year the report was again considered, and at that time a more carefully worked out plan was brought forward. The same general scheme was advocated, retaining the rectangular form. But the townships were to be seven miles on a side instead of ten, the statute mile was substituted for the geographical mile. Surveys previous to sale were recommended because they would give information concerning the land to be sold, and because they would preclude "controversy on account of the bounds to the latest ages, a promise which has scarcely been fulfilled."

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The survey into squares was advocated because it would be the cheapest, as in most cases but two sides to the square would need to be run. On the 20th of May the Land Ordinance of 1785 was finally passed by Congress, and in its amended form was substantially as follows: The Territory ceded by the states was to be disposed of as soon as the Indian title was purchased. The land was to be surveyed into townships of six miles square, subdivided into lots one mile square. The first lines north and south, and east and west, were to commence on the Ohio River at the Pennsylvania border, and only the township lines were to be actually surveyed.

The only surveys to be executed under the Ordinance of 1785 were those of the Seven Ranges in Ohio. These were made under the direction of Thomas Hutchins, Geographer of the United States, in 1785 to 1789. It is to be noted that as the surveys progressed in Ohio new ordinances were passed and old ones amended so that altogether there were six distinct laid districts in that state.

If you will look at plate 2, you will note that fig. 1 shows a method of numbering the sections in a township. This was the method used in the first seven ranges in Ohio. Fig. 2 shows the method finally adopted and is the one used in surveying Michigan Territory.

One might fairly say that Ohio was the proving ground for our system of Land surveys. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Land Ordinance as reported to Congress on April 26, 1785, required surveyors to divide the territory into Townships seven miles square, each section to be one mile square, and that the sections be numbered from 1 to 49. On the 3rd of May, of the same year, the section regarding the extent of townships was amended so as to make them six miles square. Nothing was done at that time about changing the number of sections in a township. As far as is shown by the records it was not noticed that a township six miles square could not contain 49 sections each one mile square, until the 6th of May. On that date an amendment was offered changing the number of sections from 49 to 36, and it was <u>lost</u>. In fairness to those early lawmakers, however, it should be noted that it was other provisions contained in the same amendment which caused it to be lost. Finally, on the 20th of May, the proper amendment was passed.

In 1803, Jared Mansfield was appointed Surveyor General of the United States, and in that same year the surveys of the public land in this state were initiated.

Michigan Territory was created in 1805, and included Iowa and Wisconsin. The war of 1812 and the events which led up to it interrupted surveying activities, but when the war was over there immediately followed a widespread movement to give worthy veterans bonuses by giving them land in the government-owned public domain. Accordingly, Congress in 1815 appropriated for this purpose two million acres of land to be located in Michigan Territory. Edward Tiffin, who had succeeded Mansfield as Surveyor General, in 1814 took over active supervision of the survey of this tract.

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The Treaty of Detroit provided that the Indians were to cede to the United States all that land lying east of a line running due north from Fort Defiance, which is now Defiance, Ohio. Congress directed that the soldiers' tract be laid out east of this treaty line, and Tiffin very promptly made contracts with several deputies to run the line of this treaty boundary and begin laying out the tract.

That boundary line became the Michigan Meridian. It is at 84° 22' 24" West Longitude and was run north from Fort Defiance 114 miles; then at 78 miles north of Defiance a base line was run east to Lake St. Clair. It is a parallel of Latitude 42° 26' 30" North. This is supposedly the north boundary of Jackson, Wayne, and Washtenaw counties.

The actual facts are that the Eight Mile Road is roughly on the Base Line, but that when the deputies were subdividing the townships into sections and quarter sections, about 1819, an error was made in traversing around Whitmore Lake and probably still more in traversing around Base Lake and Portage Lake, so that the county line as now located from Whitmore Lake west appears to be from a few hundred feet to nearly an eighth of a mile south of the true Base Line.

It is generally agreed that the surveyors who subdivided the townships into sections were responsible for this error. There were reasons for making errors in those days, not the least of which was the extremely difficult terrain that had to be traversed by the surveyors. I wish to quote a letter written by Surveyor General Tiffin to Josiah Meigs, Commissioner of the General Land Office, on November 30, 1915.

> The surveyors who went to survey the military land in Michigan Territory, have been obliged to suspend their operations until the country shall be sufficiently frozen to bear man and beast. Knowing the desire of the Government to have the lands surveyed as soon as practicable, and my earnest importunities to urge the work forward, they continued at work, suffering incredible hardships, until both man and beast were literally worn down with extreme sufferings and fatigue. The frost set in early and the ice covered nearly the whole country, but broke through at every step, and the pack horses could not get along with them. They were therefore obliged to submit to the climate and its attending rigors, and desist for a while, intending to attack them again so soon as they think it possible to proceed--so soon as their health and strength is recruited, I expect to see them all, only one of them having been here /Chillicothe, Ohio/ yet. In the meantime, I think it my duty to give you the information, believing that it is the wish of the Government that the soldiers should have lands fit for cultivation; and that the whole of the two million acres appropriated in the Territory of Michigan will not contain anything like one-hundredth part of that quantity, or is worth the expense of surveying it, perhaps you may think with me,

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that it would be proper to make this representation to the President of the United States and that he may arrest all further proceedings, by directing me to pay off what has been done and abandon the country.

Mr. Tiffin, just by way of adding a little evidence to witness to the truth of his remarks, included in this letter to Meigs a description by one of his deputies of the lands they were surveying, as follows:

> The country on the Indian Boundary line is with some exceptions low wet land, with a thick growth of underbrush, intermixed with very bad marshes, but generally very heavily timbered with beech, cottonwood and oak. From the Indian Boundary line eastward the number and extent of the swamps increase with the additions of numbers of lakes from twenty chains to two and three miles across. Many of the lakes have extensive marshes sometimes covered with pine called tamirack and uniformly covered with six inches to three feet of water.
>
> The margins of the lakes are not the only places where swamps are found for they are interspersed throughout the whole country, and filled with water as above stated. The intermediate space between the swamps and lakes is with very few exceptions a poor, barren, sandy, land on which scarcely any vegetation grows except small scrubby oaks. The streams are narrow and very deep, in comparison to their width and it is with utmost difficulty that a place can be found over which horses can be conveyed.
>
> A circumstance peculiar to that country is exhibited in many of the marshes, by their being thinly covered by a sward of grass which sinks from six to eighteen inches from the pressure of the foot at every step and at the same time rising before and behind the person passing over.

There is much more in the same vein in that surveyor's report.

I presume that by this time you have made up your minds that Tiffin and his deputies were Americas champion liars, such however is not the case. His report was correct, his deputies were not tenderfeet; they had spent years surveying in Ohio and were reporting honestly and accurately. Read the reports of early travelers along the Raisin, the Huron, or the trail from Detroit to Pontiac, Flint, and Lansing, and they all tell you of the almost impassible swamps and marshes encountered on their journeys. These men were surveying the upper reaches of the river Raisin, the Waterloo area, the Lakeland area, and the great flat plain which formed the bottom of glacial Lake Maumee.

The upper reaches of the Raisin and the marshes lying to the west, especially in the vicinity of Clinton and Manchester, are still a big challenge to even the most adept surveyor. The Waterloo area is so rugged that I feel it would be safe to say that there is not a single mile of section line in that part of Jackson and Washtenaw Counties that does not contain a lake or a swamp or cross a stream, and the Lakeland area is still as tough a task as any surveyor cares to tackle.

The Base Line was run on the north side of Washtenaw County by Joseph Fletcher and Alexander Holmes in 1815. The township and Range Lines were laid out in 1815 amd 1816 by Joseph Fletcher, Alexander Holmes, and Benjamin Hough. Hough ran the Range Line on the east side of Jackson County and also ran several of the township lines on the west tiers of townships in Washtenaw. Alexander Holmes ran many of the township lines on the east three tiers of townships.

Joseph Francis Wampler re-ran the Base Line in 1819 and said he could not find many of Fletcher's corners. Also he re-ran the township and range lines of Lyndon and Sylvan Townships, including the Jackson County line on the west side of these townships, in 1824, and during the same year John M. Mack re-ran the remainder of the Jackson-Washtenaw County line and the boundaries of Manchester and Sharon Townships, finding few of the stakes set by Hough.

The townships of Lyndon, Dexter, Webster, Northfield, Lima, Scio, Ann Arbor, Superior, Lodi, Pittsfield, Ypsilanti (with its French claims), and Salem were subdivided by Joseph Francis Wampler (after whom Wampler's Lake is named). He finished his contract in 1819.

The townships of Sylvan, Sharon, and Manchester were subdivided by John M. Mack, and the returns made in 1824.

Bridgewater, Saline, York, Augusta, and all of Freedom except sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, and 18, were subdivided by Joseph Francis, who also completed his contract in 1819.

A great swamp covered the unsurveyed sections of Freedom Township and not until 1846 did it become dry enough for a survey. Samuel Pettibone, who was a deputy and later became county surveyor, was given the contract to survey the missing sections. This piece of territory is still pretty tough going.

Altogether the original surveyors did an honest job in this county and considering the difficulties encountered a fairly good job of land surveying. To most young engineers, and some not so young, it appears to be very inaccurate, but when you remember that those men were working in the wilderness without a single good road to travel on and had to depend on foot travel for locomotion and were equipped with a compass without a telescope, and chain 66 feet long with a hundred links to measure with, it is really remarkable that they were so successful. The price paid for their surveying was three dollars per mile run and marked.

One cause of much argument among modern surveyors is the fact that when southeastern Michigan was surveyed the Surveyor General's office had not yet adopted the system of correction meridians and correction parallels. The result of that lack of orderliness is that there are to be found in this district all kinds of trial and error corrections. For instance, the range line between Manchester and Bridgewater, Sharon and Freedom, is an attempt at making a correction meridian. This correction line extends south far into Lenawee County. The main interest for us lies in the fact that there is a jog in the county line so that the southwest corner of Bridgewater

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A great swamp covered the unsurveyed sections of Freedom Township and not until 1846 did it become dry enough for a survey. Samuel Pettibone, who was a deputy and later became county surveyor, was given the contract to survey the missing sections. This piece of territory is still pretty tough going.

Altogether the original surveyors did an honest job in this county and considering the difficulties encountered a fairly good job of land surveying. To most young engineers, and some not so young, it appears to be very inaccurate, but when you remember that those men were working in the wilderness without a single good road to travel on and had to depend on foot travel for locomotion and were equipped with a compass without a telescope, and chain 66 feet long with a hundred links to measure with, it is really remarkable that they were so successful. The price paid for their surveying was three dollars per mile run and marked.

One cause of much argument among modern surveyors is the fact that when southeastern Michigan was surveyed the Surveyor General's office had not yet adopted the system of correction meridians and correction parallels. The result of that lack of ordinances is that there are to be found in this district all kinds of trial and error corrections. For instance, the range line between Manchester and Bridgewater, Sharon and Freedom, is an attempt at making a correction meridian. This correction line extends south far into Lenawee County. The main interest for us lies in the fact that there is a jog in the county line so that the southwest corner of Bridgewater

Township is over 1300 feet north of the southeast corner of Manchester Township. The error was finally corrected out at the corner of Sylvan, Lima, Sharon, and Freedom Townships.

The line between Lyndon and Dexter was changed in the course of subdividing into sections and quarter sections, and the correction or change was evidently made after Dexter Township had been surveyed into sections. If you follow the surveyors' notes for the lines east and west between sections on the west side of Dexter Township, you wind up about 600 feet west of the established township line.

Don't be alarmed, however, over land titles, for subsequent orders from the Surveyor General's office established the township and range lines as the boundary lines, and the lines between sections on the west and north sides of a township as closing lines, and the corners where these lines close on the adjoining township as closing corners, and directed that when a surveyor is retracing such lines he is to set a monument where the closing line intersects the Township or Range line and to note its distance from the closing corner for legal reference, the monument set in the township or range line then marks the true section corner and the closing corner is merely a reference point.

There soon developed some trouble spots in the surveys as settlers began moving in. Worst of the lot was Salem Township. The settlers complained so vociferously over the land boundaries that, in 1844, Congress authorized a resurvey of the township and a contract for the work was let to Harvey Parks, who finished the work in 1845. There are all kinds of ridiculous stories to account for the discrepancies found in the survey of this township. One of them tells that when Wampler made the original survey the land was so swampy and brushy that he deemed it impossible to make a regular survey, so he purchased some cowbells with which to equip his chainmen. Then, having set up his instrument out on some dry ground, he sent the chainmen to pace off the miles and to ring the cowbell when they set a section corner. He would then aim the instrument at the sound of the bell and record the bearing. Of course, that story is not true. It is a most notable fact that when Mr. Parks made the re-survey he found stumps of trees corresponding roughly to the witness trees described by Wampler, but in many cases where Wampler described a beech, Parks found a maple or a hickory, and vice versa, which leads one to feel that some land sharks may have learned how to move section corners in such clever fashion as to deceive even the deputies.

Mr. Parks was able to find actual monuments for section corners at nearly every corner in the township, but the monuments were so ridiculously situated that he had to be guided by orders from the Surveyor General's office, and the General land office established the arbitrary ruling that "where a retracement survey is being made and monuments can be found and identified, the monuments will stand as correct, even if they are not where the surveyor said he put them." Salem Township lines are just as Parks found them.

One of the important orders issued by Congress was that all small brush was to be cut for a width of four rods along the section lines as surveyed and trees to be blazed on either side of the line

in such fasion that trees two rods away from the section line on either side would have a blaze directly facing the section line. Trees directly in the line were blazed on the line on either side of the trees, and trees from a few feet to over a rod from the line were blazed quartering to the line on either side of the tree.

Another and still more important act of Congress made this strip four rods in width along the section lines a reserved right-of-way to provide ingress and egress to the various parcels of land as they were sold.

This was the pattern of things when the first settlers arrived. Although there were no wagon roads built by white men as yet, there actually were many miles of well travelled Indian trails in the territory. Most of our modern state roads roughly parallel or actually follow these old Indian trails. We can say with assurance that the route of US 112, Pontiac Trail, Dexter Road, and Huron River Drive from Ann Arbor to Dexter, were in use as human highways for hundreds of years before the white man took over.

When a new settler arrived in the county, he would go to the land office and look over the plat of parcels not yet sold, note how near he could get to where he felt that he would like to settle by following one of these old trails, then go with a deputy surveyor to look the land over.

After following the trail to the point where it intersected a section line in the tier of sections he wanted to follow, he would turn off the trail and follow the well blazed section line. When he found a quarter section to his liking, he would come to the nearest section corner and note what corner it was by reading the surveyor's scribe marks on the trees, if there were any. The deputy surveyor would lay out and stake his quarter or quarter-quarter section, and would certify his description for the record in the land office.

The cleared strip along the section line needed little more axe work to let him drive his oxen and wagon over this route to bring in his family and belongings.

This practice varied, of course, according to the locality. Most of the section lines so travelled later became public roads. As soon as enough settlers had arrived, a county was organized. All of the early settlement was under the county of Wayne. Washtenaw County was organized in 1824, with Ann Arbor as the County seat. Practically all of the territory west of Ann Arbor was under the township government of Dexter Township. The veterans of 1812 were given lands elsewhere and our county was settled by a mighty sturdy group of immigrants. As soon as the county government was organized, the authority of the United States Deputies ceased and a county surveyor was elected.

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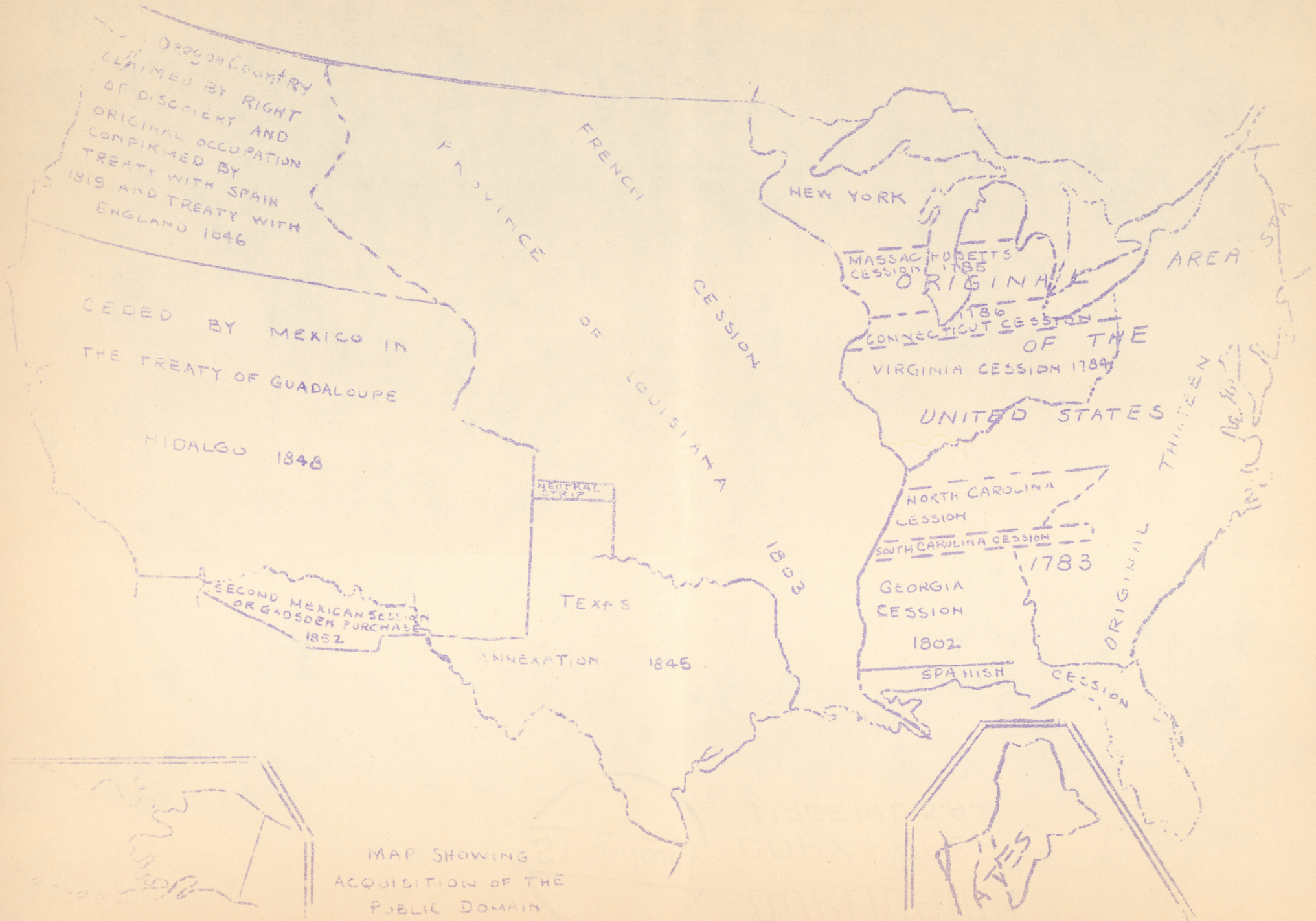
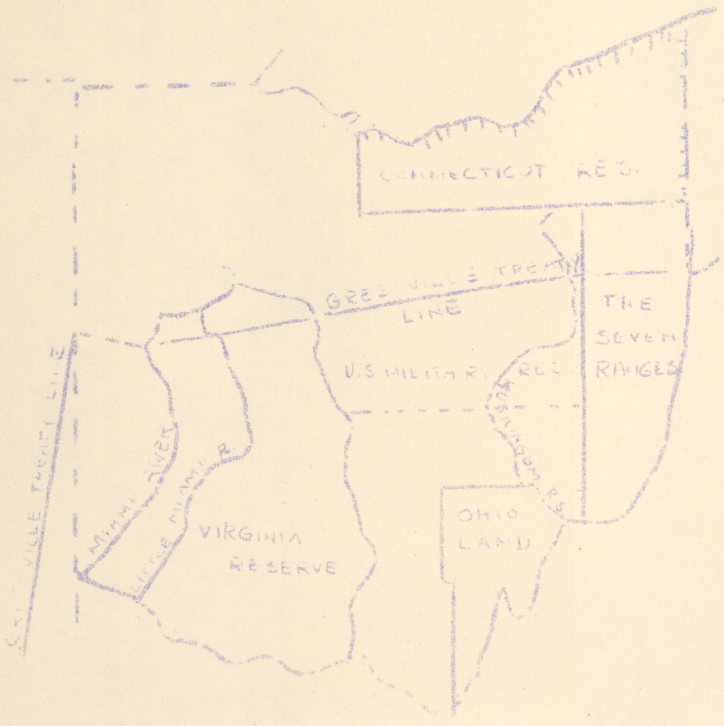


MAP SHOWING ACQUISITION OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN



Map of Ohio
Showing The Survey Districts

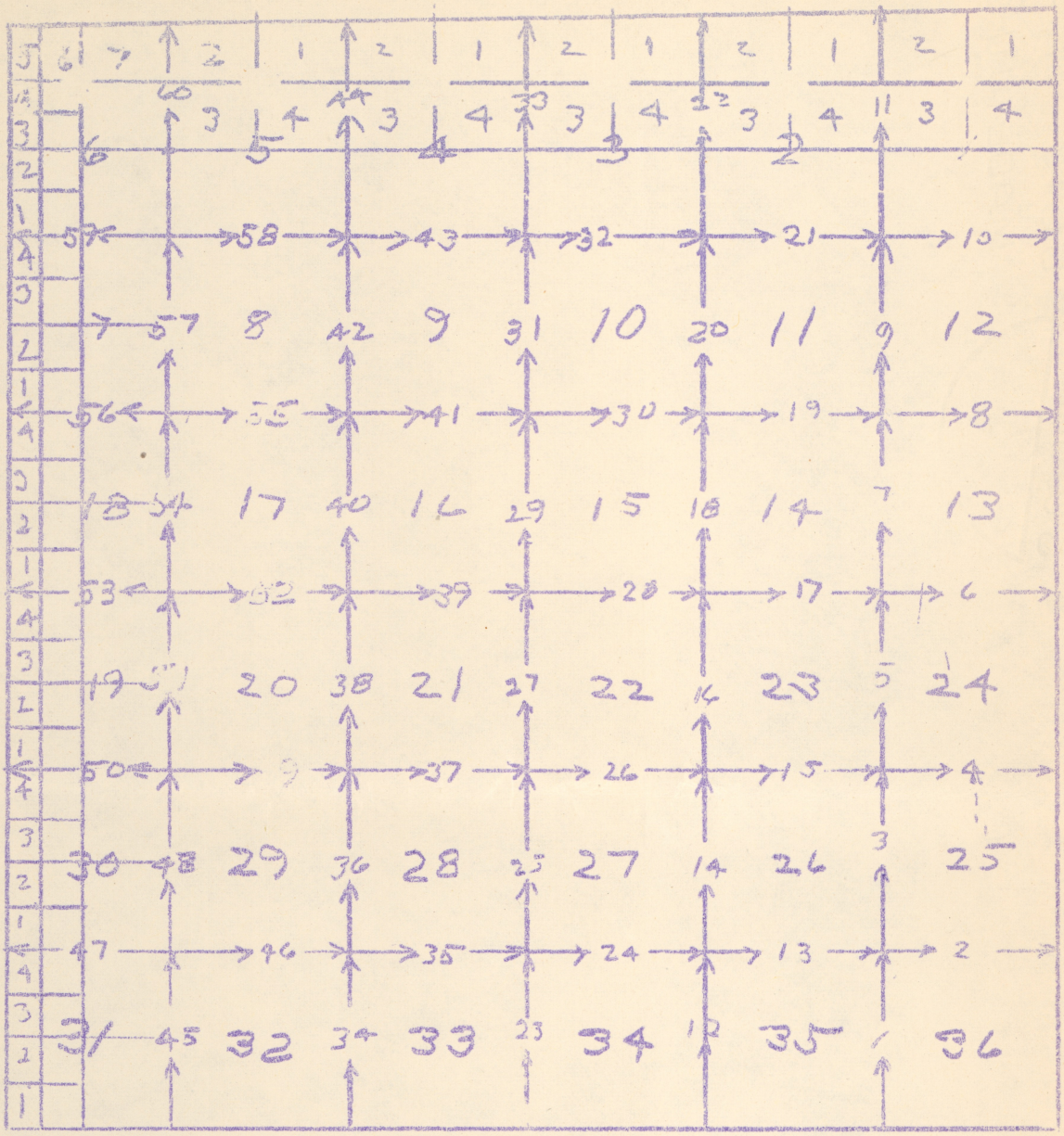
36	30	24	18	12	6
35	29	23	17	11	5
34	28	22	16	10	4
33	27	21	15	9	3
32	26	20	14	8	2
31	25	19	13	7	1

Ordinance of 1785
Fig. 1

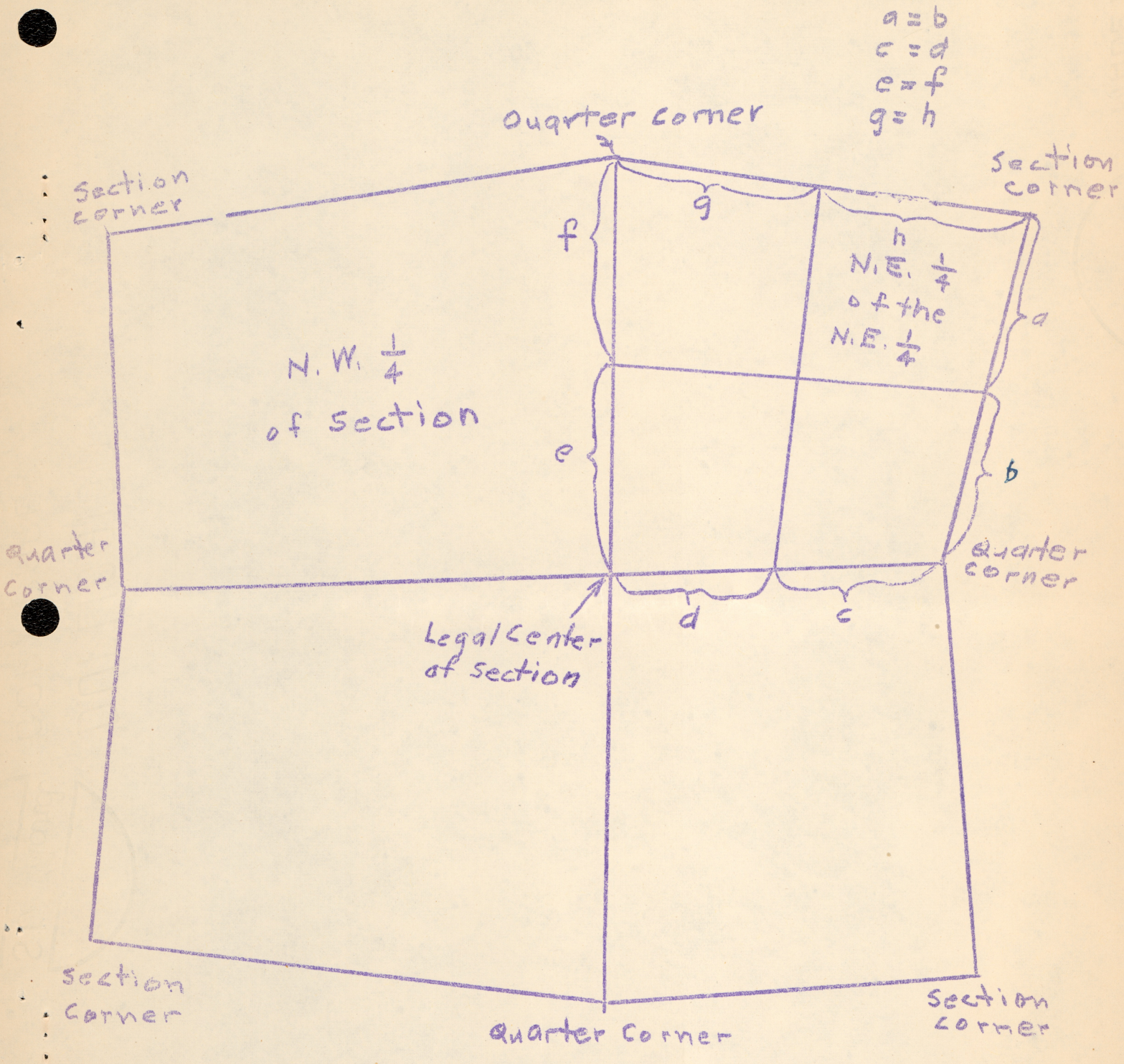
6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

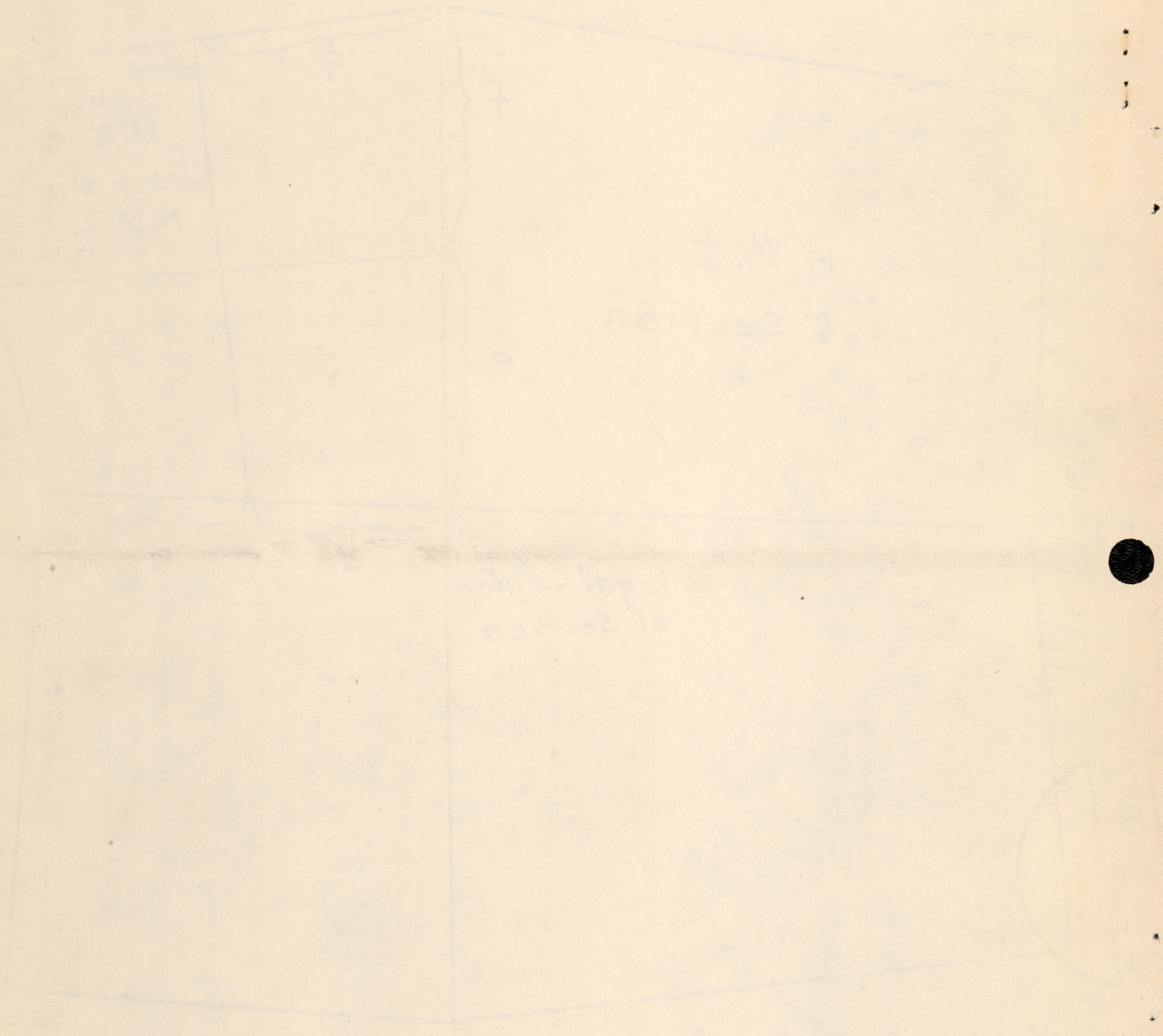
Act of 1796
Fig. 2

Methods of Numbering
Sections



Regular subdivision of a township. Note the arrows show the direction in which the lines were commonly run and the numbers show the order of precedence. Note the fractional quarter-quarter sections numbered as lots on the west side. This was the usual procedure on both north and west tiers. However when the land was very swampy the type of fractional lots shown on the north side was used.



SKETCH SHOWING REGULAR SUB-DIVISION OF A NORMAL SECTION

Note: This shows the section somewhat distorted although cases as bad as this are sometimes found.